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WHAT MR. WALLACE REVEALED

By Felix Morley

The palace revolution attempted by Henry A. Wallace has aroused, and for some time will continue to arouse, a flood of excited comment. Somewhat paradoxically, the furor has tended to conceal rather than to clarify the importance of an episode with an underlying moral of the utmost importance to the future of this Republic.

The timing of the Madison Square Garden speech -- seven weeks before the vitally important Congressional elections -- immediately concentrated attention on its domestic political effects. The thinly-veiled criticism of the Secretary of State by the Secretary of Commerce was then supplemented by revelation of the latter's earlier attack on State Department handling of atomic energy problems. All this was conclusive evidence that the Administration is split from top to bottom.

The immediate international repercussions were equally sensational. Four days after receiving his cue from our Secretary of Commerce, the Russian Foreign Minister, Mr. Molotov, bitterly attacked Secretary Byrnes' reminder that the Potsdam Agreement was not designed to make Germany an economic and political satellite of the Soviet. In this statement, of September 16, Molotov cuttingly conceded that "some American circles" may support the American Secretary of State. But at least one Russian-licensed paper in Berlin told its German readers bluntly that President Truman did not dare to discipline his pro-Soviet Secretary of Commerce. Until last Friday, many American fellow travellers thought the same.

In Great Britain, the reaction to what was described as the "anti-British" speech of the Secretary of Commerce was equally pronounced. The London Sunday Times called it invaluable for the Russian policy of blocking Anglo-American co-operation and pointed out that: "Mr. Wallace is making exactly the same mistake as the isolationists who favored letting Hitler have his will."

In short, Mr. Wallace gave the rickety post-war apple cart a terrible shaking. Yet good may come of it, if the net result is realization that what we have seen approaches reversion to methods of personal gov-

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ernment by the last surviving disciple of the New Deal who was in a position to lead a coup d'état. In that playing with fire, which would seem extraordinary to anyone except for the deterioration of our political standards, lies the real significance of the Wallace episode.

II

When a Republic begins to turn lawless, the character of aspiring leaders becomes a matter of supreme public importance. This is true in the case of Mr. Wallace, for it is improbable that his enforced resignation will mean his disappearance from political life.

While his ambition is equally unbridled, and his self-confidence as unlimited, it must not be thought that Mr. Wallace is similar in character, talents or personality to the late President. His political intelligence is less keen than was that of Franklin D. Roosevelt; his Messianic complex is stronger. In a lecture which Mr. Wallace delivered as far back as 1934, available in his too much neglected book entitled Statesmanship and Religion, occurs this revealing observation:

> "Of course, the outstanding characteristic of the [Hebrew] prophets which is lacking today is that intensity of conviction which enabled them to say, 'Thus saith the Lord.' Frankly, I see no reason why there should not emerge today men who are the modern equivalents of the prophets of old."

The outstanding characteristic of the prophet, in which category Mr. Wallace has for some years, and increasingly, regarded himself, is a flaming disposition to destroy existing patterns. Whether his name be Isaiah, Elijah, Amos or just plain Henry, the denunciatory urge in the prophet is necessarily stronger than the will to construct. Demolition, not building, is his function.

Undoubtedly it was Mr. Wallace's will to destroy what he deems unworthy which led to his sharp attack on "British imperialistic policy" and his coincident, illogical defense of the far more insidious imperialism of Communist Russia. And, like the prophets of old, the Secretary of Commerce seemed to give scant consideration to the accuracy of assertions needed to bolster his case. The prophet is no judge, concerned to sift and weigh available evidence. He is a prosecutor, interested only in attributing guilt.

Thus we find Mr. Wallace, who is certainly no historian, basing his defense of Russian aggression on the extraordinary assertion that "Russian history for over a thousand years has been a succession of attempts, often unsuccessful, to resist invasion and conquest -- by the Mongols, the Turks, the Swedes, the Germans and the Poles." There is no attempt to reconcile this statement with the fact that the victorious Slav Empire now stretches from the Adriatic to Alaska and all along

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its periphery is bringing continuous pressure for still further expansion.

When it suits the case he seeks to make, however, Mr. Wallace does not hesitate to contradict himself. Continuous foreign aggression, he says, explains Russian recalcitrance and Russian suspicions. Nevertheless, "Russian ideas of social-economic justice are going to govern nearly a third of the world." In other words, we must simultaneously pity an unfortunate victim and conciliate his triumphant arrogance.

As the Washington Post said editorially, on September 19, "It is the lack of statesmanship, the lack of a sense of history and of historical forces, that makes the Wallace-Truman crassness so tragic."

III

Consistency is as unimportant as accuracy to one who believes himself called by Destiny to play the role of prophet. If Secretary Wallace had wanted to be fair to his own Administration he would have admitted that Secretary Byrnes, under great difficulties, has valiantly sought to carry on the foreign policy of Secretary Hull which President Roosevelt sponsored. Wallace, rather than Byrnes, breaks with the Roosevelt-Hull line, as can be shown from the record.

Returning from the important Moscow Conference, in the fall of 1943, Secretary Hull, on November 18 of that year, made a report on the Roosevelt Administration's foreign policy to both Houses of Congress, saying:

> "As the provisions of the four-nation [Moscow] declaration are carried into effect, there will no longer be need for spheres of influence, for alliances, for balance of power, or any other of the special arrangements through which, in the unhappy past, the nations strove to safeguard their security or to promote their interests."

This should be contrasted with Mr. Wallace's open advocacy of spheres of influence in his Madison Square Garden speech, when he asserted that, ". . . whether we like it or not, the Russians will try to socialize their sphere of influence, just as we try to democratize our sphere of influence."

So there was neither factual accuracy nor political consistency in the attack which led to the downfall of the Secretary of Commerce. There was, however, evidence of an urge to augment existing chaos, which explains why the New York Daily Worker, official organ of American Communism, immediately indorsed the Wallace stand. In that connection another quotation from Statesmanship and Religion deserves scrutiny:

> "I trust we shall never have to have a prophet like Elisha who stirred up Jehu to bloody revolution. And in this connection, it is interesting to note that Jehu formed a compact with the Rechabites, the communists of that day. . . . Yes,

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> I trust that we shall not need Elishas and Jehus and Rechabites to cure the evils of this civilization by causing the blood to flow in the streets."

IV

The evils in American civilization are not less glaring for the work of the New Deal. But none of them can be solved by "bloody revolution," of which the world has seen far too much for its health in recent years, nor by compacts with Communism on the part of political leaders who fancy themselves as prophets.

Incidentally, the story of Jehu, as told in the ninth and tenth chapters of II Kings, itself should point that moral to Mr. Wallace, for as a ruler Jehu was a dismal failure who "took no heed to walk in the law of Jehovah, the God of Israel, with all his heart." Moreover, it may be recalled at this juncture that while Jehu was wholly without mercy, toward Jezebel and many less spectacular sinners, he was at least the anointed king of Israel -- not merely Secretary of Commerce -- before he began his career of vengeance.

The outcome of all the bloody disorders chronicled in the Old Testament, and of all the other dreadful periods of anarchy since, combine to teach us that violent men, performing violent deeds, achieve no social improvement whatsoever. It was to find a constructive alternative to "bloody revolution" that the founders of this Republic laid down a government of laws, under which the most sweeping changes -- as the past few years attest -- can peacefully be made effective so long as the majority of the electorate clearly approves these changes.

In its full bearing the Wallace episode reveals the current tendency to revert from a government of impartial law to a government of arbitrary men; to government by those with the temperament of a "Fuehrer," swept by emotion, subject to strong passion, mystically conscious of a guiding force which seems to them to sanctify their hot-headed acts.

Mr. Wallace is out, and there is no reason to exaggerate his personal importance. Nevertheless, the incident which we have just witnessed is a straw in the wind, unpleasantly reminiscent of Benjamin Franklin's warning that while our form of government would doubtless prove "a blessing to the people if well administered" it:

> ". . . can only end in despotism, as other forms have done before it, when the people shall become so corrupt as to need despotic government, being incapable of any other."

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events VOL. III, NO. 39

By Felix Morley September 25, 1946

In spite of a general disposition to let bygones be bygones, and to get on with the perennially interrupted task of reconstruction, there is a continuing current of anxiety in Washington as a result of the circumstances of the Wallace resignation.

This anxiety is not voiced publicly, for the assumption that "divinity doth hedge a king" is deep-rooted in our national mores. But the revelation of Presidential incapacity is the subject of much private comment, in which the following observations are salient.

Mr. Truman read and indorsed the famous Madison Square Garden speech of Mr. Wallace in advance. Beyond that, it seems that he told at least two associates that it was "a good speech." Moreover, on the morning of September 12, the day the speech was given, the President went on record at a press conference as approving not merely the paragraph in which Mr. Wallace said that his views represented Administration policy, but also as approving the speech as a whole.

There has been some comment on the irony of expelling Mr. Wallace for saying what the President specifically authorized him to say. But critics have stopped short at drawing the inescapable conclusion. Former Secretary Ickes came close to the mark when he said that "Wallace comes out of this with more credit than Truman." But even "Honest Harold" pulled his punch.

The plain truth is that Mr. Truman, for all his good instincts, has shown himself wholly lacking in comprehension of the very serious and delicate problems which the United States confronts in the field of foreign policy. What is almost worse, his intimate advisers in the test showed equal incompetence as deep-sea navigators. In this, say the charitable, the White House is only representative of the American people as a whole -- which may be true but is not for that reason consoling.

Under our system of government the President is guaranteed that office until January, 1949, regardless of the outcome of the elections this November and regardless of possible future miscalculations. That is why optimism over the replacement of Mr. Wallace by Mr. Harriman is somewhat restrained. If the Captain does not read his charts correctly, safety in unfamiliar waters is not assured by a change for the better in the Purser's office.

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In The Decline of the West, Oswald Spengler emphasizes the importance of "form" in the life of a nation. When a people are "in form" -- living in the manner to which they are traditionally accustomed and for which they have been educated and trained -- their corporate life proceeds smoothly. When out of form there is a continuous jangle of blunders and discontents.

Some thoughtful citizens, pondering the philosophical rather than the political bearing of the Wallace upheaval, have reached the conclusion that fundamentally it represents a blind effort to regain national form. The United States, they say, is not "in form" as a great imperial power, drafting boys from New Hampshire and Oklahoma to do police duty in Korea and Austria. It was "in form" during the period of what William Graham Sumner called "blessed isolation."

As this column pointed out last week, the Madison Square Garden speech of Mr. Wallace was at bottom strongly isolationist in thought and flavor. Amusing confirmation of this diagnosis is at hand. In an interview in the New York Times last Sunday Colonel McCormick, of Chicago Tribune fame, observed that his objective is to save America from "the twin evils of Russian Communism and British Imperialism." This story was datelined the very day after Mr. Wallace had reiterated,

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immediately following his resignation, that "I am against all types of imperialism and aggression, whether they are of Russian, British or American origin."

Colonel McCormick and Mr. Wallace are not the only curious bedfellows to be found in these days of confusion. And the isolationist dormitories will very likely become as crowded as those in our colleges if the conviction grows that crusades for liberty abroad have an unhappy tendency to undermine liberty at home. When we were managing our own affairs, in small self-governing communities, we were "in form" and contributing mightily to human happiness. But as a Great Power, making atomic bombs and forcing our customs down other peoples' throats, we are something else again. Just what is not yet certain. It looks uncommonly like Rome in the days when its dominions and its degeneracy were expanding side by side.

To Mr. Wallace, and to a great many others who think more clearly, this trend is repulsive. But it is rather late in the day for New Dealers to go Chicago Tribune now. We are the people who have inadvertently fostered and developed a new world force which may easily come to make the Nazi menace look like a problem in simple arithmetic. We cannot get back to form by appeasing Communism now.

* * * * *

Speaking of Communism, it would be interesting and helpful to have a little more publicity given to the activities of Mr. Max Lowenthal, who was appointed about six weeks ago as General Counsel to General Lucius Clay, head of our military government in Berlin.

The New Leader, outstanding organ of moderate Socialism, is one unofficial agency interested in Mr. Lowenthal, his ideas, his objectives and the conduct of his present important post. The issue of September 14 states that: "Lowenthal was a member of the original National Committee of the International Juridical Association, which was organized by the Communists in New York City in the early thirties to provide legal defense for Communists and fellow travellers." In Washington, where he worked earlier for the Board of Economic Warfare, Mr. Lowenthal is one of a number of administrative officers regarded as having strong Communist leanings.

One directory where Mr. Lowenthal is not listed is Who's Who, which seems an unfortunate omission in the case of a man entrusted with the extremely important policy-making post he now fills.

It may be mere coincidence, but since Mr. Lowenthal's appointment General Clay has permitted leaders of the Soviet-sponsored SED (Socialist Unity Party of Germany) to address mass meetings in the American zone of occupation. It is not reported that opponents of the SED are allowed to express their opinions publicly in Russian-occupied Germany.

Many in Washington are asking whether the ousting of Wallace will be followed by a purge, on lower administrative levels, of officials whose sabotage of the Administration's foreign policy is less spectacular, but not necessarily less effective. That, judging by its crocodile tears for the debacle of "liberalism," is what our American Communist press seems to fear.

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One of the most praiseworthy achievements of American journalism in recent years was the action of the New Yorker in devoting all of its editorial content, in the issue of August 31, to the story of Hiroshima.

Those who have read this admirable piece of reporting by John Hersey, or who will soon read the book which is a more lengthy account, should also get hold of "The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki," published by the Manhattan Engineer District of the U.S. Army and edited by Lieut. Colonel David B. Parker, of the Corps of Engineers. It is not a restricted document.

This dry official summary has far less artistry, but more factual information, than Mr. Hersey's report. It tells us, for instance, that in addition to military considerations one of the reasons for selecting Hiroshima as the first atom bomb

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target was because: "The city as a whole was highly susceptible to fire damage." Hopes of obliterating the Japanese wholesale in their flimsy little homes were realized, since: "In Hiroshima over 60,000 of 90,000 buildings were destroyed or severely damaged by the atomic bomb."

The Army report says further that the total number of casualties caused by the bomb will never be exactly known. One reason for this uncertainty was "the extensive destruction of . . . hospitals." But the "best available figures are" that out of a population of 255,000, a total of 66,000 people were killed and 69,000 more were injured.

Thus, in this primitive first attempt, we succeeded in killing outright a little better than one out of every four people in the entire city. It is thought that approximately two-thirds of those killed -- men, women and children -- were burned to death, more or less painfully. Quite a number, however, were cleanly blown to fragments, especially within a radius of a thousand feet from the center of the explosion. In this area the mortality was estimated at the really efficient figure of 93 per cent.

So far as known this interesting document has not been introduced as evidence at Nuremberg. But it does give rise to an uneasy feeling that, in the committing of "crimes against humanity," the Nazi leaders about to be sentenced there were less distinctive in ruthlessness than we have been led to believe.

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"All This and Heaven Too" is the cynical comment of a correspondent on the equanimity with which we simultaneously execute those whom we designate as war criminals, while decorating those who developed and dropped the atomic bomb. "You have to hand it to Uncle Sam," he writes. "Not everyone could get away with that."

Our friend may be crowing a little prematurely. A long time back Plutarch wrote his treatise: "Concerning Such Whom God Is Slow to Punish." And it was a beloved American poet who advised us that:

"Though the mills of God grind slowly,
Yet they grind exceeding small;
Though with patience He stands waiting,
With exactness grinds He all."

* * * * *

It is said that there are communities in which Chester Bowles, former head of OPA, could easily be elected dog catcher, assuming he would divert the livestock of that office to local meat stores. Nevertheless, Mr. Bowles' first shot at a higher elective post missed badly.

Aspiring to the Democratic Senatorial nomination in Connecticut, Mr. Bowles at the last minute apparently decided his chances to be named for Governor were slightly less ragged. But Connecticut, like other States, has had experience of Mr. Bowles' governing and its citizens are ready to do a little bowling themselves. Last week the State Democratic Convention passed up the Bowles candidacy in favor of Lieut. Governor Wilbur Snow, long a popular professor at Wesleyan University.

In opposition to Professor Snow is Republican nominee James L. McConaughy, who a few years ago resigned the presidency of Wesleyan, a relatively small institution as famous for its interest in active politics as it is for the high quality of its scholarship. In view of the continuous class warfare waged with refined intensity between college presidents and their faculties, the Connecticut gubernatorial contest will arouse much more than academic interest in all our academies of the higher learning.

To the hoi polloi, however, Connecticut politics, always exciting, would this year be even more fascinating if the vivid Claire Luce had not most regrettably refused to give the voters the pleasure of electing her to the Senate. As they would say in the Nutmeg State, that grates.

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Notes and Quotes

Occasionally our ego prompts us to cite instances in which HUMAN EVENTS, since our first issue on February 2, 1944, has proved itself remarkably prescient. With due humility, therefore, we now quote words written well over a century ago by a real master in the art of farsighted political analysis. The source, with which all too few of our ostensibly educated are familiar, is Alexis de Tocqueville's Democracy in America, the concluding lines of Part I of that epic work. The place and date of original publication was Paris, January, 1835.

"There are at the present time two great nations in the world . . . I allude to the Russians and the Americans. . . . The Anglo-American relies upon personal interest to accomplish his ends and gives free scope to the unguided strength and common sense of the people; the Russian centers all the authority of society in a single arm. The principal instrument of the former is freedom; of the latter, servitude. Their starting point is different and their courses are not the same; yet each of them seems marked out by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe."

* * * * *

Elsewhere in this issue we refer to the official War Department Report on "The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki." Readers who wear hats might paste this concluding paragraph where it will lie close to their cerebral operations:

"Aside from physical injury and damage, the most significant effect of the atomic bomb was the sheer terror which it struck into the peoples of the bombed cities. This terror, resulting in immediate hysterical activity and flight from the cities, had one especially pronounced effect: persons who had become accustomed to mass air raids had grown to pay little heed to single planes or small groups of planes, but after the atomic bombings the appearance of a single plane caused more terror and disruption of normal life than the appearance of many hundreds of planes had ever been able to cause before. The effect of this terrible fear of the potential danger from even a single enemy plane . . . in the event of any future war can easily be conjectured."

* * * * *

English scribes are happily not too preoccupied to indulge in a little kidding at the expense of American ebullience. A good example is the comment of the London Economist on the proclamation of our War Department scientist who announced: "I fully believe that I will stand on the moon in my lifetime." Writing before the eruption of l'affaire Wallace, the Economist dryly observed:

"The failure of Government agencies in Washington to consult one another is notorious, and it looks as if the Pentagon has failed to clear its lunar invasion plans with the State Department. For the diplomatic complexities promise to be numberless. Imagine the icy voice of Mr. Molotov asking Mr. Byrnes if the Monroe Doctrine is to be extended to the Moon? Or is the satellite to be roped into UNO to add one more vote to the Anglo-Saxon bloc? If so, Russia will not hesitate to call on her patriotic scientists to bring in Mars, the original Red planet, to redress the balance."

* * * * *

To redress the balance ourselves, we cull from Reynolds News of London:

"Two London girls who arrived in America in a cargo ship in May came back to Britain yesterday in another cargo vessel. They gave as their reason for leaving England that jitterbug dancing had been banned from a dance hall in their locality."

Admittedly it is a dubious compliment to be the Mecca of the bobbysox from every clime. But at least these London maidens were bundled back to Britain.

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